

First Grade

This quarter students are continuing to show improvement with their computer skills. Through the exploration of KidPix and Math Blaster software, students reinforce skills and concepts learned and mastered in the classroom. During their unit on Antarctica, students used KidPix to create their own design of a flag for Antarctica, after looking at examples created by actual Antarctica explorers. Students used the drawing, paintbrush, stamp and text tool. The students also created a drawing of a penguin using the pencil tool and using directions and images as a guide (you can find the step by step instructions here: <http://www.unclefred.com/draw/penguin/penguin1.html>). Our final Antarctica activity in KidPix had the students use not only their creative and technology skills but also their math skills by working on a penguin math coloring page. Students had to use their knowledge of basic math facts to come up with a correct answer to fill in the different shapes with the correct color using a legend. You can find a copy of the picture here: <http://www.coloring.ws/t.asp?b=m&t=http://www.coloring.ws/cbn/cbnpenguinadd.gif>. We continued to build upon their math skills by working with the program Math Blaster. To master this game, the user must solve math problems to complete four levels. In the first level, the Trash Zapper, the user has to solve math facts problems to earn tractor beams to try and zap space-borne recyclables. When 15 pieces have been collected, the user moves on to the Number Recycler level. Here, the challenge is to create correct equations while recycling unneeded equation variables for later use. From the Recycler, the user moves on to the Cave Runner activity. This activity requires the most mental gymnastics. Here, our hero has a number on his back. To jet his way to the higher levels inside the cave where Spot has been taken, the user must mentally calculate the values of math operations on opposite sides of multiple openings, and choose the opening whose values bracket his own number. And to make it a bit more challenging, the hero's number changes as he bumps into descending water drops which carry mathematical 'charges.' Finally, our hero encounters the evil Trash Alien in his space ship, and has to confront not only math problems, but floating space trash obstacles. Again, this reinforces computational skills and improves the speed with which they resolve problems. The first graders have really enjoyed mastering this game as well as their math facts!

The following technology standards were introduced and developed during this quarter:

NETS•S (National Educational Technology Standards for Students)

1. Creativity and Innovation

Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students:

- a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.

3. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students:

- c. collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions.
- d. use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions.

5. Digital Citizenship

Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students:

- a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.
- b. exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity.

6. Technology Operations and Concepts

Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations. Students:

- a. understand and use technology systems.
- b. select and use applications effectively and productively.
- d. transfer current knowledge to learning of new technologies.

The students are doing a wonderful job, and I am looking forward to another quarter full of exploration and discovery.